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Applicant

Examiner Walsh,

Thank you for speaking yesterday about a proposed amendment to overcome the 101 rejection and focus the claim set on allowable subject for an Examiner's Amendment.

To overcome the 101 rejection, the proposed amendment adds the language "executing instructions on one or more processing devices such that the one or more processing devices perform the following:..." to independent claim 60. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification at, for example, page 5, lines 5-14, page 13, lines 15-23, and page 18, lines 14-18.

To overcome the 102 rejection, the proposed amendment focuses the claim set on allowable subject matter by removing "a message board currently accessed by the user" as one of the types of online context recited by independent claims 60, 77, and 81. Notably, the other alternative types of online context, as specified by dependent claims 2, 3, 5, and 86, are allowable. Thus, removal of the alternative which is not deemed allowable is believed to focus the independent claim on the allowable subject matter.

The proposed amendment below cancels independent claims 84 and 89 and their respective dependent claims.

1. (Cancelled)
2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining Internet domains currently accessed by the other users.
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining newsgroups currently accessed by the other users.
4. (Proposed Amendment) ~~The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a message board currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining message boards currently accessed by the other users.~~
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a URL currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining URLs currently accessed by the other users.
6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining an online context on which the user presently is focused, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining online contexts on which the other users presently are focused.

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7. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user comprises identifying other users who enter the online context of the user and users who leave the online context of the user.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an age of the user or of an other user.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to a demographic identifier of the user or of an other user.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an expertise rating of the user or of an other user.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an interest of the user or of an other user.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to a participation status of the user or of an other user.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the information related to the participation status comprises a visibility preference of the user or of the other user.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the information related to the participation status comprises information defining the participation status of the user or of the other user based on multiple online contexts.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises trait information of an individual selected as an associate by the user or by an other user.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information related to an online status of the user or of an other user.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16 wherein the online status comprises a status of active, idle, away, and/or mobile.

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising:  
storing other information related to the online context of the user; and  
storing other information related to the online context of the other users,  
wherein causing presentation, to the user, of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of other users comprises causing presentation, to the user, of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of other users based on the stored other information.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises information indicative of an identification of the user or of the other users.

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20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the information indicative of an identification comprises an online identifier associated with the user or with the other users.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 wherein the other information comprises contact information of the user or of the other users.

22-37. (Cancelled)

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to send an instant message to the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to send an email to the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to contact directly the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users using a voice communication.

42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 41 wherein the voice communication employs a mobile device.

43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 38 wherein enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users comprises enabling the user to store contact information of the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users to a contact list of the user.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43 wherein the contact list of the user comprises a buddy list.

45-59. (Cancelled)

60. (Proposed Amendment) A method of informing a user of other network users, the method comprising:

executing instructions on one or more processing devices such that the one or more processing devices perform the following:

determining an online context of a user, the online context being one or more of a web site currently accessed by the user, an Internet domain currently accessed by the user, a newsgroup currently accessed by the user, ~~a message board currently accessed by the user~~, or a URL currently accessed by the user;

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determining an online context of other users;  
storing trait information for the user;  
storing trait information for the other users;  
comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;  
based on the comparison, identifying a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and  
causing presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user.

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing information related to an age of the user to information related to an age of the other users.

62. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 9 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing a demographic identifier of the user to a demographic identifier of the other users.

63. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the number of users in the group of the other users.

64. (Cancelled)

65. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

66. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises an interest of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

67. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises an interest of an individual selected as an associate by the at least one user in the group of the other users.

68. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises an expertise of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

69. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 65 wherein causing presentation of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users comprises causing presentation of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users graphically.

70. (Cancelled)

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71. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users comprises causing presentation of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users, wherein the users in the group of the other users are sorted according to trait information.

72. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein the trait information comprises information indicative of a location.

73. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 72 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing information indicative of a location related to the user to information indicative of a location related to the other users.

74. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising repeating the act of determining the online context of the user, the act of determining the online context of the other users, the act of storing trait information for the user, the act of storing trait information for the other users, the act of comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users, the act of identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user, and the act of causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users at a user designated interval.

75. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising repeating the act of determining the online context of the user, the act of determining the online context of the other users, the act of storing trait information for the user, the act of storing trait information for the other users, the act of comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users, the act of identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user, and the act of causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users at a system designated interval.

76. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising:  
determining a changed online context of the user;  
comparing the changed online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for each of the other users in the group of the other users;  
based on the comparison, identifying a group of the other users sharing the changed online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and  
causing presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users.

77. (Proposed Amendment) A system for informing a user of other network users, the system comprising a processor connected to a storage device and one or more input/output devices, wherein the processor is configured to:

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determine an online context of a user, the online context being a web site currently accessed, an Internet domain currently accessed, a newsgroup currently accessed, ~~a message board currently accessed~~, or a URL currently accessed;

determine an online context of other users;

store trait information for the user in a users store of the storage device;

store trait information for the other users in the users store of the storage device;

compare the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

identify, based on the comparison, a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

cause presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users.

78. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 77, wherein the users store is migrated based on an activity level associated with the online context of the user.

79. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 77, wherein the users store is divided based on an activity level associated with the online context of the user.

80. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 77, wherein the users store is combined with a related users store based on an activity level associated with the online context of the user.

81. (Proposed Amendment) A hardware device storing a computer program configured to inform a user of other network users, the computer program comprising one or more code segments that, when executed, cause a computer to:

determine an online context of a user, the online context being a web site currently accessed, an Internet domain currently accessed, a newsgroup currently accessed, ~~a message board currently accessed~~, or a URL currently accessed;

determine an online context of other users;

store trait information for the user;

store trait information for the other users;

compare the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;

based on the comparison, identify a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and

cause presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users.

82. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 10 wherein comparing the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users comprises comparing an expertise rating of the user to an expertise rating of the other users.

83. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of an online identifier associated with the at least one user in the group of the other users.

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84. (Cancelled) ~~A method of informing a user of other network users, the method comprising:~~  
~~determining an online context of a first user;~~  
~~determining an online context of a second user;~~  
~~storing a buddy list for the first user;~~  
~~determining that the online context of the second user matches the online context of the first user; and that the second user is a member of the buddy list of the first user; and~~  
~~based on the determination that the online context of the second user matches the online context of the first user and that the second user is a member of the buddy list of the first user, causing presentation, to the first user, of an identifier that identifies the second user as having the same online context of the first user.~~

85. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 84 wherein the online context is one or more of a web site currently accessed, an Internet domain currently accessed, a newsgroup currently accessed, a message board currently accessed, or a URL currently accessed.~~

86. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein determining the online context of the user comprises determining a web site currently accessed by the user, and determining the online context of the other users comprises determining web sites currently accessed by the other users.

87. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user comprises visually distinguishing the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user from other users who share the online context of the user but do not share the at least one trait with the user.

88. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 60 wherein identifying the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user comprises:  
identifying a first group of the other users sharing the online context of the user, the number of users in the first group of the other users being less than the number of the other users; and  
identifying a subgroup of the first group of the other users sharing at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the subgroup of the first group of the other users being less than the number users in the first group of the other users.

89. (Cancelled) ~~A method of informing a user of other network users, the method comprising:~~  
~~determining an online context of a user;~~  
~~determining an online context of other users;~~  
~~storing trait information for the user;~~  
~~storing trait information for the other users;~~  
~~comparing the online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for the other users;~~  
~~based on the comparison, identifying a group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users;~~

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causing presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user; and

visually distinguishing the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user from other users who share the online context of the user but do not share the at least one trait with the user.

90. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 wherein the online context is one or more of a web site currently accessed, an Internet domain currently accessed, a newsgroup currently accessed, a message board currently accessed, or a URL currently accessed.

91. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 wherein the trait information is one or more of information related to an age of a user, information related to a demographic identifier of a user, information related to an expertise rating of a user, information related to an interest of a user, information related to a participate status of a user, information related to a visibility preference of a user, information related to an online status of a user, or information indicative of a location.

92. (Cancelled) The method of claim 84 further comprising enabling the first user to send an instant message to the second user.

93. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 further comprising enabling the user to communicate with the at least one user identified as a member of the group of the other users.

94. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the number of users in the group of the other users.

95. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 further comprising causing presentation, to the user, of the trait information of the at least one user in the group of the other users.

96. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 wherein causing presentation of the indicator that identifies the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users comprises causing presentation of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users, wherein the users in the group of the other users are sorted according to trait information.

97. (Cancelled) The method of claim 89 further comprising:  
determining a changed online context of the user;  
comparing the changed online context of the user to the online context of the other users and the stored trait information for the user to the stored trait information for each of the other users in the group of the other users;

based on the comparison, identifying a group of the other users sharing the changed online context of the user and at least one trait with the user, the number of users in the group of the other users being less than the number of the other users;

causing presentation, to the user, of an indicator that identifies at least one user as a member of the group of the other users; and



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~~visually distinguishing the at least one user as a member of the group of the other users sharing the changed online context of the user and the at least one trait with the user from other users who share the changed online context of the user but do not share the at least one trait with the user.~~

98. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 84 wherein determining the online context of the first user comprises determining the online context currently being accessed by the first user, and determining the online context of the second user comprises determining the online context currently being accessed by the second user.~~